

Treating Iran Fairly

By Ramsey Clark

Following are excerpts from an article in the *The Nation* this week. The author, a former Attorney General, visited Iran with a delegation, in defiance of a Presidential travel ban, to attend a conference on "United States intervention." President Carter has voiced an inclination to prosecute him. The Treasury Department is investigating "prohibited transactions" connected with the trip.

The Iranian Majlis, or parliament, may take up the hostage issue in the next several weeks. The mood of the people will be the decisive factor in its decision if it does. If the people feel threatened, or abused by the United States, they will oppose release of the hostages.

From the moment the hostages were taken, President Carter seemed to need to show the American people that he was strong, decisive, fully capable of dictating the terms for the release of the hostages. With each of President Carter's belligerent acts, threats and refusals to negotiate — this can be easily and fully documented if necessary — the Iranians became more intransigent.

The military expedition that President Carter ordered violated international law and endangered the hope for peace. It is unthinkable that a constitutional government could empower the chief executive to engage in worldwide police actions at his whim. It is the rule of force and violence — terribly dangerous and absolutely lawless.

It was dared only because Iran is weak. We will kill Cambodians to show our ruthless power, as we did in the Mayaguez affair, losing American lives as well. But we dared not strike the Soviet Union to release our U-2 pilot, Francis Gary Powers.

The mood in Iran is much better now. I am optimistic. The people are pained by the hostage crisis, which they know is wrong and is said to cost them \$50 million a day. The mood can be improved even more before the Majlis meets if America has the vision, courage and compassion to act nobly under pressure.

We need a new face and the reassertion of the principles on which our country is founded, in democracy, in freedom, in justice. We need to understand that our policy toward Iran has violated every value we love. We supported dictatorship, tyranny, torture, brute force and absolute obedience to authority. Now we must see that such a policy is doomed to failure — thank God.

The United States should:

(1) Renounce intervention by all nations in the affairs of others as contrary to the fundamental human right of self-determination.

(2) Assure Iran and all countries that it supports the cause of international justice and law and assure all nations the right "to seek" to extradite wrongdoers in accordance with law and similarly "to seek" the recovery of stolen property. (This is the standard of the declaration that the American delegation approved in Teheran for which President Carter says we, or at least I, should be punished.)

(3) Enact a charter to control the Central Intelligence Agency by rule of law, assuring its accountability to the American people and prohibiting immoral conduct.

(4) Initiate a Congressional investigation to expose to the world the full truth about U.S. interventions in Iran.

(5) Express humane sorrow for the death of 70,000 persons, the imprisonment, tortures and ruination under the Shah's brutal regime and honestly ac-

knowledge the role our Government played and show that we value their lives equally with our own and understand that the temporary detention of fifty-three persons, however wrong and harmful, cannot be equated with what they have suffered.

(6) Stop harassing thousands of Iranian students, visitors and permanent residents because we are angry at Ayatollah Khomeini. It is every bit as irrational that we beat up on them as it is that a group of Iranians hold fifty-three U.S. hostages. The students did nothing to hurt us, but we punished them severely. Their families at home are angered, and when their generation comes to leadership they will remember American justice rudely hustling them from their schools and homes and hopes.

(7) End all economic sanctions, which anger and weaken Iran. The sanctions are wrong and cannot work. They lead to trade with the Eastern bloc, subterfuge and corruption. They can hurt the United States more than Iran by alienat-

ing the Iranian people and endangering the entire region with its vital energy resources.

(8) Give thanks that throughout all the turbulence in Iran during the seventeen months since the Shah's last Prime Minister left and in a period when Americans have been assassinated, murdered and abused in many countries, not a single American has been killed or injured in Iran by Iranians. Those who died in the rescue mission were killed through acts of our own.

(9) Pray humbly throughout our nation that no harm will befall our hostages, that they will be reunited with their loved ones soon, that the Iranian people will find a new fulfillment of their own choice, freely and independently, and that humanity will find the goodness and strength and love to will peace on earth. If Americans gave such a prayer during these coming Sundays, the Iranians, a deeply religious people, would respond generously.

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